

# SETTLERS IN A NEW LAND

**SUMMARY:** Students work together in groups and role play pioneer emigrants establishing their new found homes out west in the 1850s.

**GOAL:** To introduce students to pioneer emigrant life in their new western homeland

**OBJECTIVES:** Students will plan and describe the following pioneer situations.

(1) Selecting and establishing a home site, (2) how they will make a living in their new found home, (3) rules needed for the establishment of a community, and (4) how they will preserve and protect the natural resources

**GRADE LEVEL:** Fourth, Fifth and Seventh

**TIME REQUIRED:** 45 to 90 minutes depending on group

**LOCATION:** Various sites at Lassen Volcanic National Park

**MATERIALS:** Large writing paper, felt pens, easel to support pad, large heavy paper or cardboard, and dark felt pens or charcoal. Each group will need scratch paper, pencils, and a clipboard.

**SUBJECTS:** CA History, Social Science, Economics

**KEY WORDS:**

Natural Resources - often used for the benefit of people. All the naturally growing plants, wild game and other animal life, air, water, land, and minerals.

Community - group of people living and working in close proximity. Jobs and roles are usually interdependent with other community members.

Barter - an exchange of items or labor, instead of using money which was scarce in the early days of the country.

**BACKGROUND:** Between 1847 and 1849 some 8,000 emigrants were persuaded to follow Lassen's Trail to cross into California. They were discouraged by the wandering, rugged miles and Lassen's tendency to get lost. Rescue parties were their only salvation. Peter Lassen's dubious reputation as a trail blazer spread and the trail was seldom used after that.

Nobles' Trail, established in 1851, was easier and far more direct. The trail passed Cinder Cone, crossed Deer Creek, and then followed Lost Creek to pass by Manzanita Lake. Ruts from wagon wheels can still be seen near Cinder Cone.

Footsore and weary, emigrants on the Nobles' Trail were overwhelmed with the natural beauty surrounding them. The clear streams, lush forests, and plentiful game were all they had "heard tell about" and then some.

**INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE:** This activity can be done at a number of locations in the park. Suggested locations include the Lily Pond trail, near the Loomis Museum, or the Manzanita Lake Picnic Area. Whatever site is selected, it is important to visit the site before bringing your class to the park. This will provide for better organization and success of the activity.

1. In class introduce the activity and explain to the students that they are part of a pioneer emigrant party who has finally made it to California and is about to establish a new settlement. There are a number of families settling here. Divide the students up into "family groups" of four or five students depending on the size of the class. Explain that they will be working as a family during this activity.

2. Make a list on the blackboard of the following things each group will need to plan in building their new life out west. Discuss the list with the class and have the students copy the list to use on the field trip.

Have them think about these things in class or at home before going on the field trip: (a) location of home site, (b) description of new home--inside and out, (c) what will the house be built of and how will they obtain building materials, (d) how will they get water, fuel for lamps and cooking, and food--grow, barter, buy, (e) how will they dispose of wastes, and (f) how will the livestock be cared for and be used.

3. Collect all the materials needed for the activity.

4. Bring the class to the park. Take some time when you arrive to explore the Loomis Museum if it is open.

5. Gather the class together in preparation for the activity at the site selected.

6. Set up the easel and pad.

7. Tell the students that as newly arrived pioneers, they have chosen to settle in this area. Ask them to brainstorm what factors make it a suitable location. List their ideas on the pad. (Suggestions: (a) near a river, a road, a town with supplies, (b) good soil, fresh water, shade, game, fish, lumber, and (c) deer skin, beaver fur, water for irrigation.)

8. Have the class divide into their family groups for the activity.

9. Explain that the family groups will each go out and find a home site in the area you have selected to use. Establish boundaries and make sure everyone is clear about their location. Make sure each group has a copy of the "planning list" they prepared in class. These are some things they need to think about and discuss as a family group in planning for their new life out west.

10. Remind students that they have a few items in their wagons to use. Ask them to brainstorm what those items might be and list on the pad.

11. Make sure each group has paper, pencils, and a clipboard.
12. Remind students of the park rules. Dismiss the groups and instruct them to meet back with you in fifteen minutes with their ideas.
13. While they are looking for their homesites and discussing their plans for their future, sketch a rough map of the area on the sheet of cardboard. Use dark felt pen or charcoal to look more authentic. Prop up your map on the easel.
14. As each group returns, ask them to draw their "homesite" on the map.
15. Ask groups to give a two to three minute presentation about what they have decided. Does everyone approve of all the homesites, or will there be problems? Ask the "community" to suggest improvements. Revise the map if needed.

NOTE: If you are running short of time, you may wish to finish the rest of the activity back in class.

16. Family groups will need a source of income. Ask students to brainstorm some ways a family can make a living in the new settlement. List on the pad. (Suggestions: provide a service, work in the saw mill at the next town, sell supplies to miners, be a laborer at valley farms, teach children in the settlement, provide medical help, carry mail.)
17. Ask each family group how they have decided to make a living. Call on one group at a time to write their occupation next to their "home" on the map.
18. Discuss the choices and whether or not the community could be self-sufficient.
19. Ask the class to plan how issues affecting the community will be decided? What rules are needed? Who will be in charge of enforcing the rules and deciding on punishment? Make notes on the large pad.
20. Read the following aloud, then discuss: "The cities you left behind were crowded, with few trees and overused streams. You have spent months traveling across parched deserts and rough mountains to reach this new land. You have chosen to settle in this area because of the natural beauty of the forest, the abundance of wildlife, and the clean water. How will you ensure that these resources are preserved and protected for your children and grandchildren?" Make notes on the large pad.
21. Ask each group to meet again. Working together, they will write a description of everything they have planned for their new homes, jobs, the health and welfare of their community, and how they will preserve and protect the natural resources. Allow ten to fifteen minutes; longer if needed.

**EXTENSION/ENRICHMENT:** History - Research the lives of Peter Lassen and William Nobles. Draw maps of the trails they developed. Compare the pros and cons of each trail. Develop a sense of the times by researching what events were occurring in the rest of the country during the 1850s. Language Arts -Print a newspaper for the new arrivals. Include articles on government, wars, economy, new states and boundaries changes, local announcements, society and fashion news, land and building materials advertisements, and a menu (with prices) from a new cafe. Cooking - Prepare a pot of vegetables and some biscuits in a Dutch Oven over a campfire.

**ASSESSMENT:** "Family group" and individual work from this activity provides the basis for assessment. The class can participate in self assessment by having each family group present their work to the class. The students will critique each group on the basis of how well they accomplished the objectives and planning list in No. 2 of the Instructional Sequence.

